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## BILLS OF SALE.

CUT your coat according to your cloth, is an exploded maxim ; the rule now is to have your coat cut according to your fancy, out of somebody else's cloth, and pay for it by instalments. To trade on other people's capital is the modern commercial method ; and borrowing, the order of the day. A newly enfranchised nation celebrates its independence by creating a national debt ; every city and town with any pretension to importance borrows largely on its rates ; land-owners add mortgage to mortgage ; shopkeepers raise cash upon their credit-bought stock-in-trade ; and straitened householders provide themselves with funds by giving what are termed Bills of Sale upon their household goods.

The last-mentioned method of borrowing—well described as a system of artificial credit, springing out of the repeal of the laws in restraint of usury—has developed to a pernicious extent during the last few years. Prior to 1878, a bill of sale did not protect the property covered from the claims of bankruptcy creditors. In that year, however, parliament saw fit to alter the law, and put the holder of a bill of sale—or, in other words, the party who has lent money to the needy householder—in a position to defy all creditors except the landlord. Doubtless, the alteration was made with the very best intentions ; but it would seem to be open to question, since the Lord Chancellor has found it expedient to ask the judges and registrars of the County Courts in England and Wales for information ‘concerning the recent operation of bills of sale, especially under the Act of 1878.’

Of the seventy-eight officials responding to the appeal, one declined to express any opinion on the matter, and twelve declared themselves satisfied with the working of the Act. The remaining sixty-five pronounced more or less emphatically against it, some unhesitatingly asserting that the law as it stands favours the perpetration of rogues, and directly encourages fraud. By its means, says one, conspiring men have defeated

justice and fair-dealing by fictitious transactions, supported on the testimony of those who, having had the ingenuity to conceive the plot, have had the daring on oath to support the transaction. Another pronounces almost all bills of sale given by traders to be fraudulent preferences to defeat the recovery of legitimate debts. ‘It is a common practice,’ says a third, ‘for a dishonest debtor to give a friendly bill of sale, and register it, and keep possession of all the goods covered by the bill of sale, and then recklessly run into debt, knowing that he is protected from execution by the bill of sale ; and thus holding himself out to the world and to tradesmen as a man of substance, living in a well-appointed house, whilst he has, in fact, placed himself beyond the power of a creditor to enforce payment of any debt, however improperly contracted.’

How swindling is encouraged by this measure is shown by the Huddersfield Registrar. J—W— came into that town as Manager of a branch of a Life Assurance Office. He took a large residence, obtained goods from tradesmen in Huddersfield and elsewhere, furnished his house splendidly, upon credit, and when the last suite of furniture was delivered, gave an auctioneer a bill of sale over the whole. Then he departed, carrying with him fifteen hundred pounds' worth of portable property. What he left behind him was claimed by the holder of the bill of sale ; and there being no assets wherewith to contest that document's validity, the creditors never recovered a single penny ; while many of them had saddled themselves with policies in the office for which the cheat was agent.

Perhaps the worst result of the Act of 1878 is the enormous increase it has caused in the number of advertising money-lenders, who ply their usurious trade ‘to the serious hurt of the poor and illiterate,’ and the ruin of nearly all who fall into their clutches. We have counted thirty of these advertisements in one issue of a London morning paper, all of the same pattern, whether emanating from loan-mongers trading in their own or an assumed name, or under the more

imposing guise of Discount Companies, Loan Associations, and Advance Banks, 'National' or 'Imperial.' The traps are all baited alike, with offers of prompt advances on reasonable terms to borrowers of either sex, on mortgage of furniture, farming-stock, implements, and stock-in-trade, without removal, sureties, fees, or publicity. How freely these gentry interpret their own language, was shown by one of the fraternity under cross-examination swearing that when he advertised that the strictest secrecy was observed regarding all transactions, he meant that no information was given to other money-lenders; the registering of a bill of sale, and its publication in *Stubbs' Gazette* and other circulars, being, in his opinion, no violation of the promised secrecy.

The interest required, and exacted, by these money-lenders, ought to put even the neediest on their guard. Thinking to raise money without any one but himself and the lender being the wiser, a tradesman borrowed a hundred pounds, by bill of sale, from an advertising firm at Nottingham, for which he undertook to pay a hundred and fifty-two pounds, in instalments running over two years. Finding the transaction published in the trade circulars, he desired to pay back the hundred pounds, with a fair addition for the very temporary accommodation, and received the following reply: 'DEAR SIR—Since you were here on Monday last, I have laid the matter before my principals, and they have decided not to depart from their general rule of not allowing any deduction whatever on receiving payment of the amount due on your bill of sale; and they desired me to convey to you their decision. We should be glad to hand over to you the bill of sale upon payment of one hundred and fifty-two pounds; or we should willingly execute a transfer or assignment of the bill of sale to any one who may pay off the same, which transfer or assignment would not require to be re-registered.'

How promise is kept in other respects, we have official testimony. The Sunderland Registrar deposes that there are three features of money-lenders' bills of sale deserving especial notice—an exorbitant rate of interest, from twenty per cent upwards; the addition of interest to principal, by way of bonus for the advance—the whole sum being made payable by a given number of instalments, and the interest being calculated accordingly—if default is made in any instalment, the whole amount becoming due immediately; and a power of sale so drawn as to be made available on the most frivolous pretexts, and practically at the option of the lender. One of these precious documents, issued by a money-lender in one of the largest manufacturing towns in the north of England, provides that in the event of the borrower becoming a bankrupt, filing a petition for liquidation of his affairs, making deficit in the payment of instalments, or when the mortgagee shall in his own discretion consider the security in any way

liable to be endangered, prejudiced, or disputed—he shall be empowered, without previous notice or demand, to take possession of the property covered by the bill of sale, and sell it forthwith.

Under the above conditions, a farmer borrowed a hundred and sixty pounds, to which eighty pounds was added as 'bonus'; and within three months saw all his effects swept away.—In another instance, we find the borrower giving a bill of sale for eighty pounds, in return for an advance of forty-six pounds six shillings and sixpence.—A milliner obtained a loan of a hundred and thirty-five pounds, and duly paid the first five instalments. Five days before the sixth became due, she tendered the amount to the lender, who refused to accept it then. When the proper time for payment came, the milliner was unprovided with the money; and the following day her property was seized, and would have been sold within a week, had not Vice-Chancellor Malins granted an injunction to restrain the money-lender proceeding to extremities.—A tradesman gave a bill of sale for a hundred pounds, to cover the advance of seventy pounds, with thirty pounds added for interest and expenses; made repayable in weekly instalments of two pounds; failing to pay the second instalment when due, a man was put in possession; and he had to pay a hundred and six pounds to get rid of the bailiff and enjoy his own again, the use of seventy pounds for two months costing him thirty-six pounds.—Mr B—, a woollen-spinner, borrowed eighty pounds of 'an old established firm of Manchester accountants,' on a bill of sale assigning property worth a hundred and eighty pounds, to secure the payment of a hundred and twenty pounds, by quarterly instalments of fifteen pounds. Omitting to pay the first instalment, the next day Mr B— was visited by three men, one of whom took possession of his household furniture, and the others of the contents of his mill. The day after, 'the agent of the bill of sale claimed nine pounds seventeen shillings for costs; which was paid, with five pounds three shillings on account of principal; and in five days a further sum—making a total of a hundred and thirty-six pounds sixteen shillings for a loan of eighty pounds for thirteen weeks.' The money-lenders concerned in the above transactions were not exceptionally extortionate, for a County Court judge writes: 'In almost every case which has come before me on a bill of sale given to professed money-lenders or money-lending societies, the borrower has been cruelly oppressed and defrauded.'

No prey is too petty for these home-wrecking harpies. 'G— W— of Huddersfield, and W— T— of the same place as surety, borrowed of M— the sum of five pounds, upon the security of a bill of sale of W—'s furniture, on the terms of paying five shillings a week for twenty-eight consecutive weeks. By the bill of sale—which was not registered or explained by a solicitor—it was declared that, notwithstanding the proviso for redemption, it should be lawful for the mortgagee at any time after execution of the deed to take possession of the said property, and retain possession of the same until the sum of seven pounds was paid. And in case of default,

it should be lawful for the mortgagee to take possession, and sell, and repay himself all costs, charges, and expenses; the surplus, if any, to be paid to the mortgagor. Only four pounds fifteen shillings was advanced. The principal, W—, having made default, the grantee seized the furniture, and sold it; and having received four pounds in money from the grantor, claimed to hold the proceeds of the furniture for the balance and for the expenses. The matter was compromised out of court.'

The loan-monger threatens to become to the artisan what the tallyman is to the artisan's wife. It is quite a common thing now for working-men to borrow sums of two pounds and upwards upon bills of sale, enabling the grantee to take everything his debtor possesses, not excepting his bedding, clothing, and tools. 'In this County Court district,' writes the Tredegar Registrar, 'containing a population of some seventy to eighty thousand, the bulk of which are the working classes, these bills of sale have proved a curse, inasmuch as the unscrupulous lenders push their trade to that extent by thrusting the money, at small amounts, and in nearly every instance under five pounds, on them and their wives and families, with garbled tales and fanciful inducements and promises.' The Registrar of the County Court, East Stonehouse, tells the Lord Chancellor that if he could but see a tithe of the misery caused by these instruments, he would indeed pity the poor. 'Labourers, plasterers, pensioners at a shilling a day, charwomen, and such-like, are often the grantors; and if your Lordship could look through the last year's list of bills of sale registered in this locality, you would be surprised; but that would still leave you entirely uninformed as to the non-registered ones.'

That these gentlemen have not exaggerated the state of affairs, is proved conclusively by the Return, recently published, of the Bills of Sale given in England and Wales between the years 1875 and 1880. In the first-named year, but thirty-six bills of sale were granted for amounts of less than ten pounds; while in 1880, the number reached eight thousand eight hundred and seventy-two. From 1876 to 1878, the issue of bills of sale grew from fourteen thousand two hundred and twenty-eight to nineteen thousand five hundred and ninety-six. Then the Bills of Sale Act of 1878 came into operation; and the borrowings upon these instruments rose from two millions seven hundred and sixty thousand and ninety-four pounds, to five millions two hundred and fifty-three thousand two hundred and ninety-one pounds; the number of bills increasing by more than twenty-seven thousand. Of fifty-four thousand two hundred and thirty-two bills of sale given in England and Wales in 1880—416 were for amounts above one thousand pounds; 766 were under one thousand pounds; 3038 under five hundred pounds; 4652 under two hundred pounds; 7183 under one hundred pounds; 15,327 under fifty pounds; 13,978 under twenty pounds; and, as above stated, 8872 under ten pounds. This gives a total of four millions three hundred and thirty-three thousand nine hundred and fourteen pounds! Though the foregoing number is a large one, it is much within the mark, the Return compiled by Messrs Blackham & Co. putting the number of bills of sale issued in 1880 at 56,828.

With such facts before us, and considering the widespread misery they entail, it would be well if the entire system were made the subject of legislative revision.

### THE FORTUNES OF BERTRAM OAKLEY.

#### CHAPTER L.—MR PRYOR MAKES HIS REPORT.

'I HAVE succeeded, Mr Oakley, succeeded more quickly than I had thought possible, in obtaining information,' said Mr Pryor, of the Private Inquiry Office, in Northumberland Street, Strand.

Bertram had again called upon him, in compliance with a note which he had received; and in the meantime, important events had taken place. Mr Walter Denham, after remands, and energetic protests, and wordy demurrs, well contrived by his painstaking solicitors and the eminent counsel whom they had persuaded to exhibit their forensic powers in the cramped arena of a police court, had been fairly committed for trial. The prisoner, by his own ingenuity and the aid of his legal advisers, had fought a good fight, disputing every inch of ground, every coign of vantage, in the teeth of crushing proofs. But at last he was committed for trial; Crawley, as Queen's Evidence, being the mainstay of the prosecution, and of course being assured of the immunity which attends such minnows of crime as bear witness against the Tritons. At Southampton, a new Assistant Manager filled Bertram's former place, to the discontent of the rough wrights, who growled that their young favourite's promotion had deprived them of a man who knew by instinct how to manage men. At Blackwall, mighty projects, due to the fertile brain of Bertram Oakley, and approved by the keen intellect of Mr Mervyn, were being carried into execution, with unsparing cost and toil. For marine construction, iron was to replace lumbering wood, steel to replace iron; steam was made to do, in time-saving, what sails had never done; and wherever British bunting flies, a new impetus was to be imparted to the ocean commerce that is the healthy lifeblood of the world. The expense of all this was very great, the risk considerable; but without expense and without risk, no heavy crops can be reaped by sea or land. Already the City Article of the cautious *Times* itself prognosticated for Messrs Mervyn, Lynn, and Oakley a colossal success.

And here was Bertram in the Northumberland Street Office, anxious, pale, watchful of Mr Pryor's inscrutable face, as the sharp-featured, crook-backed dwarf surveyed him with sidelong glances. It was a peculiarity of the Private Inquirer that he was loath to part with the information he had painfully acquired. He doled it out drop by drop, as some druggist of the Middle Ages might have dispensed minims of some noble elixir ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus.

'Mr Pryor, tell me one thing—are my parents alive and well?' asked Bertram eagerly.

'All in good time,' was the ambiguous answer. 'I only beg, I only plead, to tell my story from the beginning.' And Mr Pryor shuffled the papers on the desk before him, as if they were a pack of cards, and after clearing his throat, proceeded:

'I have given very great attention to this

inquiry, Mr Oakley, I can assure you—very great. It has been quite a pet case with me, perhaps because it is so very different from the commissions usually intrusted to me. We have to do so constantly with the darker side of our common humanity, sir, that— Well! I am glad to be reminded that there is such a thing as a silver lining to the cloud. I have taken pains to put these matters into good hands. A man of education—university M.A.—did the Gloucestershire part. My correspondents, Ward and Schuyler, of Chicago, United States, undertook the American department. All things in order,' added Mr Pryor softly, consulting his papers, and then went on: 'You were born, Mr Oakley, at a village, picturesque in its way, called Whitethorn, a few miles out of Gloucester. Whitethorn stands on the declivity of a spur of the hills that traverse the county, and overlooks the Severn. Naturally,' repeated Mr Pryor, 'standing high, it overlooks the Severn'—

'But my father and mother'— Bertram began again.

'All in good time,' said the Private Inquirer, with a deprecatory wave of his outspread fingers. 'Well, sir, your forefathers dwelt, evidently, for many generations in that hamlet. That is proved by the crumbling tombstones among the yews of the churchyard; and by the parish register, very perfect, and in which the name of Oakley constantly occurs, since the time when, in the reign of Henry VIII., Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, and keeper of the Seals and the king's conscience, first invented registers. Well,' pursued Mr Pryor glibly, 'the exact antecedents of your immediate ancestors, Mr Oakley, were, I need not say, a little difficult to disentangle from the confused scraps of oral tradition, which my highly educated emissary could pick up. These yeomen families, land-owners, perhaps, in one generation, tenant-farmers in another, and then possibly artisans, have perplexing ups and downs in the world. Your grandfather, sir, undoubtedly farmed a bit of hill-land—Oakley's Piece, they call it to this day—which had perhaps been freehold once; and his only son, Richard, who was perhaps not robust enough for agriculture, was a master-carpenter in Whitethorn village. He married. A son was born. And then came the emigration to America, the shipwreck, and his own rescue and that of his wife by a passing vessel. Thus your parents reached the New World.'

'But then'— said Bertram, eager to learn more.

'That,' Mr Pryor replied, 'was the really difficult part of our inquiry. People change about so much in the United States, that the Oldest Inhabitant of a township may be perhaps a mere carpet-bagger. If any one in America can scent out a lost individual, Ward and Schuyler are the men; but even they were at fault for some time. No clue, you see. Nothing to guide them. At last—in Missouri it was, in Jackson City—they did hear of a Mr Richard Oakley that had set up some saw-mills, and was formerly considered as a thriving citizen. But, if fortunes are easy come by in the New World, Mr Oakley, they are easy lost. The river—the Mad Missouri, they call it—in one of its sudden floods, that carry down buildings, and grain, and timber, like straws upon the muddy tide—washed away your father's mills and

stock, and turned him into a poor man again. Thence, with great trouble, we traced him into Kansas, and afterwards to Colorado, then a wild, half-settled Territory, ranged by buffalo herds and Indian bands, but where a white man, with industry and luck'— Mr Pryor left off speaking, and fidgeted with the papers before him. Bertram watched him attentively, and augured little good from his evident unwillingness to speak. 'Mr Oakley,' he said suddenly, 'it goes against me, but I must tell the truth. Industry your father had; luck he had not. He settled in Colorado, at a place called Honeyville. There, every evil that could befall a settler, short of being scalped by his savage neighbours, seems to have beset him. The locusts swept his maize-fields as bare as a threshing-floor; the Indians stamped his cattle; fever, ague, famine, decimated the settlement; and eight years ago, your father, mother, and a young sister born to them in America, were laid to rest beneath a blazed sapling, in the desolate prairie, with a rude inscription to commemorate the names. Honeyville is a town of twenty thousand people now, I am told, a wealthy mining locality, with hotels, and theatres, and newspaper offices where once log-huts stood; but the prosperity, for those whose memory is dear to you, came too late, sir.'

'It did indeed, and mine as well,' answered Bertram, as he hid his face and wept.

#### CHAPTER LI.—AT THE BAR.

There was a crush of eager sightseers in the Central Criminal Court, for was not Walter Denham, Esq., long known—so the London papers averred—in the artistic circles of the capital as a distinguished virtuoso, to be put on his trial? Elegantly dressed, outwardly calm, the mark of all eyes, the accused took his place in the dock. He preserved his well-bred composure, contemplating the robed and bewigged judges, 'a terrible show,' as Gay's highwayman hero in the *Beggars' Opera* styled them, the 'twelve men in a box,' who compose the palladium of our liberties, the unnecessary array of horse-hair-wearing counsel, the police, the tipstaves, and the spectators, with stoical unconcern. The only eyes from which he seemed to shrink were those of Bertram Oakley, fraught as they were with sad reproach. For the rest, the lover of Art manifested an almost insolent indifference.

The trial began. The Attorney-general, with two colleagues learned in the law—Bagster, Q.C., and a young Mr Mellish—were for the Crown. For the prisoner, very eminent legal assistance had been obtained. Mr Serjeant Silvertongue was a host in himself. He was thought, as many orators are, better for juries than for judges; but the acquittals he had obtained, in defiance of hostile summing-up, were his chief title to the confidence of admiring attorneys. This champion did not stand alone. 'With him,' as the technical phrase is, were Firk, Q.C., Mr Quillet of the Midland Circuit, and a shy, corpulent, middle-aged man, who wore his unaccustomed wig askew, and kept in the background, but who was nevertheless the celebrated barrister Mr Briggs, one of those chamber counsel who really know the law concerning which others merely wrangle.

Sir Richard Sharpe, the Attorney-general of

that period, a hard-hitting man, in and out of parliament, smiled as he surveyed the imposing aspect of the defence. 'Finesse won't do,' he whispered to Mr Bagster, 'when there's a good hand with trumps in it.'

Sir Richard opened the case for the prosecution. He did his duty well and in masterly fashion, using the moral scalpel, so to speak, as unsparingly as ever did surgeon employ the keen-edged steel, and laying bare, stroke after stroke, the ugly inner man which lurked beneath the plausible outside of Mr Walter Denham. There were no flourishes, no attempt at display; but in a cold, passionless way the portrait was traced, the history of the crime made coherent and clear, every statement clenched, as a workman drives home a nail by steady hammer-strokes; no exaggeration anywhere, but merely the exhibition, before heaven and earth, of a bad, artful, heartless man, who, for the meanest of motives, had been guilty of the basest of deeds.

While this scathing philippic went on, every eye in the assemblage eagerly turned to see how the prisoner bore it. Surely he must cower and shrink, under that cruel hailstorm of accusing words, as men recoil from the fiery rain of red-hot cinders, and the blighting glare of the molten lava! But no! With serene, almost disdainful indifference, Uncle Walter listened to the worst that Sir Richard could find to say of him, and remained as apparently unmoved as though he had been a theatrical critic, and the Attorney-general a tragedian on whose performance he was presently to pronounce a professional opinion. When the great lawyer sat down, an all but unanimous verdict of 'Guilty' would have been returned by the throng of spectators in court.

Then young Mr Mellish, the hard-working junior on the Crown side, rose and proposed that the deposition of Nathaniel Lee, deceased, should be 'put in.' Mr Quillet, for the defence, objected. He was there on purpose, if he could, to put a spoke in the wheel of the car of Justice. There was a passage-of-arms between the two learned gentlemen. Firk, Q.C., struck in for the prisoner; while steady Mr Bagster, also in silken gown, came to the help of nervous Mr Mellish. The Bench overruled the objection, and the dying statement of the adventurer was read aloud. You might almost have heard a watch tick, so breathless, so intent, were those who listened greedily to its revelations. The audience seemed indeed to be all ear.

Serjeant Silvertongue and his auxiliaries were not the men to allow this written testimony, this voice from the dead, to pass unquestioned; and so, not having been strong enough to prevent the reading of this important document, they bestirred themselves to destroy, or at anyrate to mitigate its effect. It would be labour lost—Serjeant Silvertongue felt that—to attempt to talk the jury into oblivion of the salient features of Nat Lee's deposition, taken down in the Accident Ward of St Bartholomew's Hospital. The leader for the defence knew the length of the British jurymen's foot—so the attorneys who competed for the honour of retaining him were wont to boast—remarkably well. These nice points of law, vexatious to the audience, a weariness to the Box, are to the Bench what technicalities of music, cricket, chess are to a select few. Some judges love precedent so

much, that it is only necessary to remind them how Lord Bagwig blundered, or Baron Crankey affirmed perverse propositions, when George III. was king, to bring about reservations, arguments before Courts of Appeal, reversals, and immunity. There was a long tussle, wearisome to the audience, Greek and Hebrew to the junior bar, but full of interest to some tough old seniors, and to their Lordships, no doubt. Firk, Q.C., and Quillet of the Midland Circuit, did their very best, aided tacitly by Mr Briggs, who kept watch, and pencilled from time to time a few words on a slip of paper, that was passed up to the bewigged gentleman on his feet. No fee, were it half the fortune of a Croesus, would have induced that eminent chamber counsel, Mr Briggs, to speak. His was the unobtrusive part of prompter in the drama then going on; but after each of his promptings, there came a rustle of robes, and a bending of one judicial head towards another, and a suppressed murmur, and a consultation of books, and a scratching of pens on 'notes,' so called, and then a solemn ruling of the Court.

'Call Henry Crawley!'

Mr Crawley did not need much summoning, but soon exhibited his broad figure, his pasty complexion, and shaggy red eyebrows, in the witness-box. There was a stir of delight among the spectators at this exciting moment, for here was a villain confessed, come to purchase liberty by the betrayal of another villain. His examination in chief was straightforward enough. Crawley's story was substantially that which Nat Lee, on his deathbed, had already told. Queen's Evidence though he was, Sir Richard questioned him gently, almost respectfully. The Attorney-general treated this tolerated knave as old Izaak Walton advised us to handle a frog used for pike-fishing, tenderly, lovingly. In a shamefaced way, but clearly enough, Crawley told all. He had forged the will, when once Nat Lee's mechanical ingenuity had conquered the resistance of the lock which secured the safe. The will, produced in court, found at Crawley's lodgings at Notting Hill, was the true will of Mr Robert Denham, the Dulchester banker. It gave the bulk of the property to the eldest son, Dr Denham. The witnesses to the will were yet alive. They had been produced in court. It was worth nobody's while to badger, bait, or annoy those two old gentlemen from Dulchester. Of the contents of the will which they had witnessed they knew no more than we do of the foundation-stone that may underlie the Great Pyramid of King Cheops of Egypt. But they did know that Mr Denham, the banker, had spoken with unswerving esteem of his elder son William, 'who will have plenty, when I am gone,' and had made scanty and disparaging mention of extravagant and idle Walter.

Then Mr Serjeant Silvertongue nodded to Firk, Q.C., and that gentleman, learned in the law, rose to cross-examine Henry Crawley. Firk was good at witnesses. He set to, in a business-like way, at the dissection of this witness.

But Mr Firk, Q.C., found in Crawley a dogged customer. Even old Serjeant Browbeat, that terrible gownsman, at whose feet Mr Firk had studied when he addicted himself to Old Bailey practice, could not have made much of Henry Crawley, brought to bay. The people who can really be bullied are the nervous men, the timid

recluses, the dishonest men with something to conceal, the vain, reticent women. Where there is a weak spot, Browbeat's disciples can find it out; just as, two hundred years ago, Master Matthew Hopkins the witchfinder, with his probing pins and hot irons, made matters uncomfortable for suspected sorceresses.

But Crawley bore the cross-examination unharmed; just as a favoured person, eight hundred years earlier, walked blindfold among red-hot ploughshares, or grasped the heated ball of the fiery ordeal in a soaped palm. 'Your school nickname, Mr Crawley, was Judas?' said the cross-examining counsel severely. 'You were brought up, Mr Crawley, at the Southampton Police Court, on another charge than this?' 'You subscribed to charitable institutions, and taught in Sunday-schools, I believe, sir?' Every hit told; but, such as the man was, his story hung well together, and it was corroborated by much extraneous evidence.

Firk, Q.C., toiled hard; but though he blackened Crawley, though he showed that vile reptile in his true colours, he did not whiten Mr Walter Denham in the smallest degree.

'It all depends on Silvertongue; he may talk them into it,' said old *nisi prius* heroes of the wig and gown, as the court adjourned for luncheon.

#### STUDIES IN ANIMAL LIFE.

##### FANTASTIC FRIENDSHIPS.—PART I.

ANIMALS frequently form attachments as whimsical as those formed by men. Why they do so, is one of those curious problems of nature not yet solved. Many of the friendships formed between animals of opposite dispositions and kinds spring out of the instinct of gregariousness, most creatures having a greater dislike to loneliness than even the generality of human beings have. If they cannot obtain a companion of their own kind, they will attach themselves to one of any species that may present itself. Some of their most remarkable and steadfast friendships have been made with human beings. Dogs, and most domestic animals, naturally attach themselves to the people with whom they are brought up and live, and who are frequently the only creatures they have any opportunity of associating with. Many animals, again, naturally conceive a partiality for those who feed or tend them; others entertain gratitude or reverence for those who have done them some kindness. But after all this has been taken into account, there still remain numberless well-authenticated, though not to be readily explained, instances of intense attachments, manifested by non-domestic creatures for human beings.

These curious attachments have been recorded and commented upon from a very early period. Pliny, among other instances, refers to a philosopher named Lacydes who had a goose which took so strong a fancy to him, that it would never leave him day or night, unless removed by force. The goose was his companion wherever he went, follow-

ing him through the public streets, and always striving to be with him indoors. This constancy seemed to the philosopher to be inspired by some religious feelings; he, therefore, carefully tended his strange friend while it lived, and when it died, bestowed upon it a magnificent funeral. Many similar stories of the fidelity of geese towards men are known, but, unfortunately, they have not often been so happy in their termination. The tale told by Bishop Stanley of the old blind woman in Germany who was led to church every Sunday by a gander, is well known; but not so are numerous other anecdotes of the love shown by these birds for human beings. Bishop Stanley, for example, relates how one of a flock of geese suddenly deserted its natural companions, and, for no apparent reason, attached itself to its master, a Cheshire farmer, and followed him everywhere, like a dog. Through the busy streets the faithful creature followed the farmer, as well as about the farm; when he held the plough, the goose marched sedately before him, with firm step and head erect; turning sharply when the furrow was completed, and fixing its eyes intently upon its beloved master, as if to ask his guidance. When the day's work was done, the devoted bird would follow the farmer home, enter the house, and at eventide, as he sat by the fire, would mount his lap, nestle in his bosom, and preen his hair with its beak, as it was wont to do its own feathers. When the farmer went shooting, still the goose would follow him, 'getting over the fences,' to use the man's own words, 'as well as I could myself.' And all this without encouragement, and indeed in spite of persistent discouragement, from its master, who, ultimately, taking into his foolish head a superstitious fear that the bird's strange friendship foreboded ill, inhumanely killed the faithful servitor.

Although, frequently, there is no known cause for geese thus attaching themselves to men, at other times their affection is evidently prompted by gratitude. Buffon records the intense love manifested for him by a young gander which he had rescued from the spite of an older bird. Whenever the naturalist went for a stroll into the woods adjoining his own property, the gander was sure to accompany him, and would follow him for hours in his rambles without any signs of fatigue. Eventually, this close attendance of the faithful bird became somewhat troublesome, as the poor creature persisted in following its master everywhere, to church, to the houses of friends, and so forth. 'On one occasion,' says Buffon, 'it heard me talking in the rector's upper room; and as it found the front door open, it entered, climbed up-stairs, and marching into the room, gave a loud exclamation of joy, to the no slight astonishment of the family.'

Another remarkable instance of gratitude in a goose appeared in the provincial press some years ago. An old bird, of surly habits, living in the neighbourhood of Clysthydon, was in the habit of following and attacking every person that passed. One day it tumbled into a deep, narrow drain, whence it was not able to get out again. A labourer passing by discovered the gander in this situation, and compassionately drew it out.

From that time forth, the grateful bird followed its deliverer about like a dog, and allowed him to handle it in any way he liked; but, singular to relate, to every one else it remained as spiteful as ever. Many similar stories of the goose's attachment to certain individuals are known, one of the most often alluded to being that of 'the Elgin goose,' of which it is remarked that change of dress made no difference in its power of distinguishing its noble master the Earl, for in whatever attire he appeared, the bird recognised him; and whenever he spoke to it, responded with an expressive cry of satisfaction.

But the bird so unjustly slandered as 'silly' is not the only feathered creature that adopts human beings as objects of affection. Old Burton, in his delightfully quaint *Anatomy of Melancholy*, alludes to several instances of such things; citing the case of a crane in Majorca that loved a Spaniard, and would walk any distance with him, and in his absence, seek everywhere for him, knocked at his door that he might hear her, 'and when he took his last farewell, famished herself.' In her *Recollections*, Lady Clementina Davies tells of a clever paroquet placed in her charge by its owner, Lady Aldborough, when she went abroad. The bird became greatly attached to Lady Davies, and when, on its proprietor's return, it had to be restored, grew so melancholy that it was feared it would die. Lady Davies was requested, therefore, to come and visit it. Entering the room with a thick veil over her face, the pining bird recognised her in an instant, and tried to fly across the room to her; but was either so weak, or so overpowered with joy, that it fell insensible at her feet. She lifted it up; and, directly it was restored, it began chattering to her in an excited manner, confusing together all its little songs and chatter. It manifested such intense delight at seeing its beloved friend once more, that Lady Aldborough was unable to refrain from giving the bird to her, fearing it might otherwise pine away and die.

In his *Two Years in Victoria*, Howitt gives an interesting account of the fondness displayed by an Australian stork for a man. This bird, known as the 'companion,' probably on account of its sociable habits, forms strong attachments for people. There was one at a store on the Bendigo, says Mr Howitt, running about the diggings, and though often, apparently, in jeopardy from the huge dogs that hunted it, it would not go away. Its great attraction was a stockman, whom it followed about on his rounds. When he came out of his abode in the morning, the bird began to leap and flap its wings and run round him, making the most extraordinary cries; it would then make great jumps, as high as the man's head, cutting the oddest figure with its long legs, its flapping wings, and its gaping beak. The stockman would then say to it: 'Come along, mate; let us go to the horses;' when it would leave off its capering and cries, and walk along soberly by his side. When the man went up to a horse on one side, the bird would go up to it on the other, to stop it; but if the horse offered to come towards it, it hopped away nimbly, and sought protection by the man. Wherever its human companion went, there was the bird to be seen, stalking along at his side.

But a fondness for human companionship is

restricted to neither birds nor domestic animals; the fiercest and apparently least tamable of beasts sometimes showing this unaccountable preference for man. An ancient author cited by Burton remarks, that notwithstanding the many instances of such attachments which he had heard of, he declined to believe them, for fear it should be said he gave credit to fables, until he saw a lynx, that he had received from Africa, so affected towards one of his men that he could no longer doubt. 'When my man was present,' he remarks, 'the beast would use many notable enticements and pleasant motions; and when he was going, hold him back, and look after him when he was gone, very sad in his absence, but most jocund when he returned; and when my man went from me, the beast expressed his love with continual sickness, and after he had pined away some few days, died.'

There are several well-authenticated tales of lions and other members of the cat family having put off this natural savagery when in the society of certain favoured individuals. Without reverting to the time-worn story told by Aulus Gellius, of the slave who was recognised and fawned upon in the arena—where he had been placed for destruction—by a grateful lion whose wounded leg he had formerly cured, numerous anecdotes are available of friendship between *homo* and *felis*. Edmund Kean the tragedian had a puma, or 'American lion,' as it is styled, which was much attached to him, and followed him like a dog. Of the domestic cat, almost as many records of the staunchest affection might be related as of the dog itself. Captain Stables, in his work on *Cats*, furnishes some noteworthy instances; and in the pages of this *Journal* other representative anecdotes have been given. An account of a cat which displays intense and unaccountable partiality for a certain boy in one of our great public schools, was recently brought under our own notice. The boys of a particular ward, to the number of about thirty, sleep in a row of beds, side by side. Every morning, when it is about time to get up, the cat belonging to the ward finds its way to its favourite boy, who is not known to have done anything to propitiate it, jumps on to his bed, nestles down by his side, and purring and caressing, endeavours in every possible way to manifest its affection for him. One day, owing to some alteration of the beds, it jumped on to the wrong one; and when the occupant attempted to stroke it, it became enraged, scratched him, and flew off to its favourite boy. Madame Helvetius had a cat which would not allow any one but its mistress to feed or caress it, and which never attempted to molest the birds which she kept. When its darling mistress died, the poor animal was removed from the room; but the next morning it found its way back, and was discovered on her bed, crying piteously. After the funeral, it was missed, and ultimately was discovered on her grave, dead of grief.

It has been frequently averred that wolves are not tamable, and yet there are several instances known where they have exhibited as great attachment to man as any dog could. In the *Biographia Hibernia*, an affecting anecdote of such a friendship is recounted. A large tame wolf that had been brought up from a cub on board ship, was particularly attached to a certain lieutenant. A violent storm overtook the vessel, and its

destruction appeared certain. The poor animal was sensible of the danger, and whilst its howling was most piteous, it could not be driven from the side of its friend. When the ship broke up, both the officer and the wolf got on to a mast, but were several times washed off, yet again and again, by helping each other, contrived to regain their frail hold. At last the man became benumbed, and so, although they had drifted to within no great distance from the shore, finding that he was unable to support himself any longer, he gave a farewell look and probably an endearing word to his vulpine friend, which loosened its hold on the mast, and clasping its forepaws round its master's neck, they sank together.

An almost equally affecting story of a wolf's affection for a man is told by F. Cuvier. The animal had been brought up like a puppy, and continued with its owner until full grown, when it was presented to the menagerie at Paris. For several weeks it was so disconsolate at the separation from its master, who had been obliged to travel, and so persistently declined food, that it was feared it would die. Eventually, however, its grief moderated, it took its food, and was supposed to have forgotten its former owner. But at the expiration of eighteen months, the master returned; the wolf recognised his voice amid the crowd in the gardens, and upon being released from confinement, bounded towards him, exhibiting violent joy. Again separated from its master, the faithful creature was once more afflicted as on the former occasion, until, after an absence of three years, the object of its affection revisited the gardens. It was evening, and the wolf's den had been shut up for the night; but the instant the man's voice was audible, the poor animal began to utter such anxious cries, that the door of its cage was opened, when it darted towards its friend, leaped upon him, and caressed him, and threatened the keepers, when they attempted to separate them. When its old master finally left it, the animal became ill, refused all food, and although it recovered after a long time, it grew fierce, and resented the familiarities of all strangers. After having once given its affection, it seemed to scorn any further objects of friendship.

That bears can be tamed and domesticated, is well known, and that they often take a liking for those who are kind to them, is no strange thing. In his *Animal Kingdom*, Mr Samuel Goodrich, the American author, tells a curious anecdote of a bear cub which a New Hampshire boy had found and taken home with him. The animal became as docile as a dog, following its youthful friend wherever he went, and even accompanying him every day to school. The distrust which the boy's school-fellows at first had for so singular a companion, gradually wore off, and they became accustomed to feed it from the bags in which they took their meals to school. At the end of two years, the bear wandered into the woods, and could not be discovered. Four years elapsed, and the school passed into other hands, and was attended by a new generation of pupils. One cold winter day, the door of the school having been inadvertently left open, the mistress and her scholars were horrified by the entrance of a large bear. Unable to make their exit by the door, the affrighted woman and children retreated as far into the corners as they could, whilst Master

Bruin, in no way aggressive, warmed himself at the fire. After a while, he turned his attention to the scholars' provision bags and baskets, apparently well remembering where they had been kept. Standing on his hind-feet, he put his paws into the suspended bags, and leisurely satisfied himself with their contents. He then tried the schoolmistress's desk, where some provisions had formerly been kept; but finding it locked, he went to the fire for another warm, and then went off. An alarm was quickly raised, and the young men of the village started after the bear with their guns. His footmarks in the snow were visible; so he was speedily overtaken and shot, when, to their grief, some of the pursuers discovered that they had slain the friend and playmate of their bygone school-days.

Many anecdotes of the fondness shown by elephants for those who have done them any kindness, or for children placed in their charge, are well known; whilst the records of the intense and unselfish love displayed by dogs for certain persons have already filled volumes. 'The dejection of the dog,' says a writer in the *Quarterly Review*, 'when his master is in affliction, his feverish anxiety when he is ill, his fury when he is struck by a fool or operated on by a surgeon, his fond efforts at consolation at sight of his tears, and his demonstrations of ecstasy at his restoration to health and cheerfulness, are all facts equally familiar and affecting.' After remarking that an attached dog loves us almost like a fond mother, the reviewer proceeds to cite the following characteristic instance of canine affection, from the *Animal World*: 'A lady was seriously ill, and confined to her bedroom, to which her favourite dog was rarely granted entrance. The servants of the lady daily made beef-tea for her, and threw the meat, after the juice had been extracted, to the dog. Apparently, the animal came to the conclusion that his dear mistress was being starved, or at all events, that his piece of meat would do her good. Waiting a favourable opportunity, he stole into her room with the beef in his mouth; and when she awoke, she found it deposited, as an offering of affection, on her pillow.'

#### DIAMOND ROBBERIES AT THE DIGGINGS.

In the early days of the Cape Diamond Fields, the strict honesty of the community was proverbial; and considering the rough lot congregated together, it was marvellous. The first diamond diggings thrown open to the rush of Cape Colonists were situated on the banks of the Vaal River, about thirty miles from the now celebrated Kimberley. This was in the early part of 1870. At the River Diggings, as they were called, the luck of those who toiled from 'morn till dewy eve' under circumstances of the greatest hardship, and all the various vicissitudes of digging-life, with fever and often death, was varied. Few came out of the turmoil rich, and many worse off than before they left their comfortable homes in the Colony. Good strokes of luck were therefore few and far between; and when a lucky digger extracted a gem of more than the average size, the whole camp became aware of the fact by the digger firing a gun. Then a general rush was

made to the lucky one's claim ; and the diamond—sometimes a very large one—would be handed round amongst the crowd of banditti-looking faces, for inspection and valuation. The lucky one would be too busy answering questions from numerous inquirers to notice the whereabouts of his gem ; probably it was a hundred yards away by this time, on the outskirts of the large and increasing crowd. Nevertheless, at the words, ' Fork over the stone,' back it would come to the lucky owner, who never in the interim betrayed the least anxiety about it.

Such was the honesty of the River Diggings. But it was too much to expect that such a delightful Utopian state of social perfection could last long. Nor did it. The news of diamond discoveries in South Africa soon reached America, England, and other places, the result of which was that there was soon a constant stream of people, of a questionable class, flowing into South Africa. Old diggers from California and Australia, low blackguards from the purlieus of Whitechapel, runaway sailors, deserters from the army, and any number of the lower class of Jews—these, with a good sprinkling of foreigners, some good and some bad, settled down to try their hands at acquiring a fortune. If it was not to be had the one way, it must be had the other. About this time, the Dry Diggings were opened up, and soon New Rush (now Kimberley) contained about forty thousand inhabitants ; and a rough lot they were.

Diamond-dealing had by this time become one of the principal callings of a number of the residents of the camps at the Dry Diggings. The finds had increased to an inordinate extent ; and it was not until several banks had been established, which kindly allowed the use of their safes to their customers, that a diamond-dealer had any safer place to deposit his property than in his pocket by day and under his pillow by night.

When a man sleeps in a small canvas tent, and sometimes has as much as three or four thousand pounds' worth of rough diamonds under his pillow or mattress, it was hardly to be wondered at that, now and then, a trial would be made to effect a change in the ownership of valuables, a thousand pounds' worth of which could be easily carried in one's waistcoat pocket. The writer at that time dealt largely in rough diamonds ; and it was often on his awakening in the morning that he, with fear and trembling, lifted his pillow, not without some doubts as to the safety of his property. Continual fear of robbery had so accustomed him to alertness, that a footstep a hundred yards off would wake him from a deep sleep ; and then with grasped revolver—which was always handy—he would sit up in bed, listening through the darkness, expecting each moment to hear the cat-like footstep and then the gentle ripping of the canvas close to the bed—that might serve to let a man's hand through. If the victim was a heavy sleeper, this plan was often successful. The tents were very small ; and even were the bed placed in the centre of the tent, an arm of ordinary length would easily reach the sleeper's pillow, and noiselessly abstract the pocket-book containing the treasure.

It was, however, but seldom that this plan of action met with success. The slightest noise inside the tent gave the thief an idea he was waited for,

and he withdrew quicker than he came, fearing a chance revolver bullet. This 'groping,' as it was called, once, and only once, resulted in the capture of the 'groper.' It was very cleverly done. A diamond broker one night was awakened out of a heavy sleep by feeling a hand passing over his face. He at once realised his position, and waited breathlessly, as may be imagined, until he felt the hand under his pillow. Luckily, his diamonds were not there ; but the owner of the hand seemed by his persistent search to be of a contrary opinion. The broker soon made up his mind to capture the thief. But how ? All was darkness within the tent, and making 'a grab' in the dark was doubtful work. If the 'grab' failed, the hand and arm could be quickly withdrawn through the rent in the tent, and then capture would be out of the question. The broker's thoughts reverted to his revolver, which was lying ready cocked at his side ; but he was a humane man, and did not like to have a fellow-creature's blood upon his head. However, he made a pounce at the place he considered the hand to be in, and was lucky enough, as he called it, 'to strike ile,' and secured a good firm hold of the thief's wrist. It was then a game of pull thief, pull broker ; but the broker having two hands to the thief's one, he had the best of it. The broker's shouts quickly awoke his neighbours, who soon came to his assistance ; and ultimately gave the would-be thief into custody.

An American named Marshall and his gang made the nights 'lively' for many who had valuables to lose. The use of chloroform was Marshall's own idea, and he carried out his idea with success. Saturated with chloroform, a small sponge on the end of a stick was thrust in, and held over or near the face of the sleeper. 'Groping' was then easy work, as the chances of the victim awakening were slight.

Highway robbery was, strange to say, very rare ; and only two cases occurred, though the opportunities for it were frequent.

The great post-office diamond robbery of 1871 was one of the best-planned thefts ever perpetrated at the diggings. It was nearly a success, and the thief had almost escaped to England with his spoil. In fact, he was arrested on board the steamer at Cape Town just as it was leaving. The robbery had taken place two months before, and as the most strenuous endeavours of the New Rush police had resulted in nothing, the robbery was almost forgotten ; and but for a slight accident, it would now be amongst the list of undiscovered crimes. The perpetrator of the robbery was a young man of good education and gentlemanly appearance, named Harvey, who emigrated to the Diamond Fields early in 1870. He worked long and toiled hard as a digger, but with no success. He had an honest name too ; and it was a pity that when temptation came in his way, he did not manfully resist it. The carelessness of the New Rush postmaster was the cause of the robbery ; and had that official exercised even an ordinary precaution in the care of diamonds under his charge, poor Harvey would not now be lying in a convict's grave. The New Rush post-office was merely a wooden shanty, and the postmaster was a genial fellow. On the arrival of the English mail, the small staff of sorters had enough to do. If you knew the postmaster well enough, you were welcome to go in and sort out your own letters.

You could either do this, or wait for your turn, which perhaps might be several hours. Harvey was one of the postmaster's friends, and was often seen availing himself of a friend's privilege. Consequently, he knew the ins and outs of the office, and saw the careless way that packets of rough diamonds were left in the postmaster's private office, prior to being sent away by post. It came out in evidence that he remonstrated with the postmaster as to his want of care, especially leaving the registered packets near a window which was generally open.

It so happened one day that several packets—about thirty-five thousand pounds in value—were registered for transmission to Cape Town and London. They were left as usual on a table waiting for entry and sealing in the register bag. The day was a very hot one, and the window was open as usual. The *Pig and Whistle* canteen was just opposite the post-office, and the postmaster was not adverse to tasting the liquor there, whenever invited by his many friends. On this afternoon, he went once too often. He swore he was not absent five minutes; but no matter how long or how short he was away, on his return the whole of the packets were missing!

Of course, the news spread like wild-fire, and soon there was a large crowd around the post-office. At first, the post-office officials were suspected; but as it was plain that there were none of them in the office at that time of the day, suspicion fell upon hundreds of others equally guiltless. All this time, the real perpetrator was carefully opening the packets and secreting his spoil in his tent, not one hundred yards from the post-office. The slightest breath of suspicion never fell upon him. Weeks passed, and still no clue could be found. Harvey's line of action was indeed clever; he neither excited suspicion by being too officious nor too apathetic on the matter. His whole object, however, was to leave New Rush without exciting more than usual remark. His luck had been bad, and his friends knew it. Although being in possession of an enormous amount of value, a small portion of which he could easily, and without exciting suspicion, have converted into cash, he very artfully borrowed from a friend as much as would pay his fare to Cape Town. There, he said, he would take a situation. He left the diggings unsuspected and unwatched; and, as has been already stated, arrived in Cape Town about two months after the robbery took place. He had a week to wait ere a steamer for England would leave, and here his caution relaxed somewhat. He put up at a first-class hotel, and though not in any way ostentatious, his being there caused some remark from those who had known him at New Rush.

But for a slight *contre-temps*, trivial in itself, Harvey would have been beyond pursuit in a few days. It so happened that on his voyage to the Cape he became acquainted with a fellow-passenger who was better supplied with money than himself. They were both bound for the diggings; but Harvey complained of not having sufficient cash to take him there from Cape Town. His friend, a Mr B—, generously advanced him one hundred pounds, which he promised to return as soon as he possibly could. With the one hundred pounds, Harvey started at once for New

Rush. B— remained in Cape Town for some months, and never saw or heard of Harvey or his hundred pounds until he met him—*en route* for England—in one of the Cape Town streets, about six hours before the steamer was to leave. It must first be mentioned, however, that B—, smarting under the treatment Harvey had given him with respect to the loan, had spoken of the matter to a friend of his, the Clerk of the Peace at Cape Town, and asked his advice if it were possible that criminal proceedings could be instituted in the matter. The debt being only recoverable by civil action, the Clerk of the Peace said he could not interfere, but that he would write to some one at New Rush who would act in the matter. B—, whose knowledge of civil and criminal law appeared to be rather hazy, went away perfectly satisfied at leaving the matter in the hands of his friend the Clerk of the Peace, who probably thought no more of it, or if he did, merely kept his promise by writing to his New Rush friend on the subject. When Harvey was accosted by B—, who tapped him on the shoulder, and said: 'You blackguard, I'll have you arrested,' it can well be imagined the effect those few words had upon him. He turned pale, and nearly fainted. 'Where is my hundred pounds?' demanded B—, holding Harvey by the collar.

'Oh, your hundred pounds,' said the trembling wretch, who now felt a little relieved at knowing it was not for something more he was wanted. 'O yes, my dear fellow; why, I've been looking for you. I'll pay you, old fellow; 'pon my honour, I will. I'm glad I've met you. Didn't know you were here. I would have been so sorry, had I left without seeing you.'

'Oh, that's all fine talk enough,' replied B—. 'Come, let me have the cash, if you have got it.'

'Got it?' said Harvey. 'Ay, and lots more. Look here, old fellow; I've been rather lucky lately—a good find, you know. Mum's the word, as I don't want it known. But as you were good to me when I wanted it, I'll not be mean with you now. I owe you a hundred pounds. Well, there it is; and here is another for interest;' and so saying, he placed two notes in the hand of B—, who was too surprised to say much more than: 'Thank you; I knew, after all, you were of the right sort,' &c. After renewing their friendship together at the bar of the nearest hotel, B— went his way elated.

Now, as luck would have it, the first man that B— met after leaving Harvey, was the Clerk of the Peace.

'Oh,' said B—, 'I'm so glad I have met you. Oblige by not troubling yourself further about that affair of mine—the hundred pounds Harvey owed me. He has just paid me; and the best of the joke is, he has given me a hundred pounds more as interest. Look; here are the notes. Ah! it's a good thing I met him before he left in the steamer to-day. But I should not mention it, as he told me not to say anything about it. Of course what I told you is in strict confidence.'

'Oh, of course,' replied the Clerk of the Peace. 'But where is he now?'

'Just gone into the *Masonic Hotel*. But what does it matter to you where he is now?'

'Oh, nothing. He leaves to-day, you say? I'm glad you have got your money back. But tell me this: did Harvey have any luck at New Rush?'

'Now, that's what I can't understand. It was only yesterday I met Darville, who told me that I might never expect to see a stiver of my money back, as Harvey had to borrow money to get away. Strange, eh ?'

'Rather,' replied the Clerk of the Peace sententiously, but who seemed to be thinking of something else all the time.

It was clear that the Clerk's suspicions were aroused in some way, while B—'s were not. There was still a large reward offered by the Diamond Field authorities for the capture of the thief or thieves, and the astute Clerk of the Peace saw his way to a little 'business.' Anyhow, there were reasonable grounds for suspicion, and this was enough for him. So he immediately repaired to his office; and in his capacity as a justice of the peace, at once drew up a warrant to search Harvey's luggage; and placed the warrant in a few minutes in the hands of the police, who went on board the steamer before Harvey made his appearance there. The rest is soon told, as it is needless to add that the suspicions of the Clerk of the Peace were well founded. All the stolen diamonds were found artfully concealed in the barrels of two shot-guns and a rifle. Harvey was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment with hard labour. He died before the completion of his sentence.

There were two other robberies of diamonds connected with the post-office—one from the post-office itself. The perpetrator of this was never discovered. The other was from the post-cart while on its way to Cape Town after leaving Kimberley. A man named Barry, the proprietor of an inn on the banks of the Modder River, carried this out; but being arrested on suspicion, he at once confessed, and showed where he had buried the spoil. Marshall, the American before alluded to, laid a daring plan to systematically rob the post-carts, but an accomplice divulged it; and Marshall was arrested and convicted. Latterly, diamond merchants and others had procured thief-proof safes, so that would-be robbers could not so easily commit depredations as they did in the early days of the New Rush.

As a rule, the diamond-dealing community of Kimberley are honest, though temptations daily come in their way to act otherwise. When people are hourly in the habit of handling valuables, they gradually become careless, and so it was and is with the diamond brokers of Kimberley. Experience seems never to teach them. A Kimberley broker generally carries his diamonds in small paper parcels, about the size of Seidlitz-powder papers, or larger. When he starts on his business rounds in the morning, he has often fifteen or twenty of these in a wallet or large pocket-book. In showing his diamonds to his customers, it has often happened that he leaves a parcel on the table, and forgets to replace it in his book. Perhaps he discovers his loss soon—probably at the next office he shows his goods—but oftener not until he has to return his unsold parcels that afternoon. The writer remembers a diamond merchant once showing him two parcels of diamonds—about one thousand five hundred pounds in value—that had been forgotten by some careless broker. 'I don't know whom they belong to,' he said; 'but I suppose they will be claimed soon.'

They were claimed in a few minutes after by

a broker, who came rushing in, perspiring like a bull, and in his excitement, rudely turning over all the papers on the table, while scrumaging for the parcels he had missed.

The merchant, with a calmness that was perfectly provoking to the broker, inquired what all this excitement meant.

'I have lost two parcels,' gasped the broker, as he fell exhausted into a chair. 'I can't find them. I can't tell where I left them. Good heavens, I'm a ruined man !' And to do him justice, he really looked it.

The merchant, after keeping the poor fellow on the rack of torture for a few minutes, 'to give him a lesson,' as he said, returned the parcels, but not before they had been properly described in every way.

The above kind of thing often happens. But it is with pleasure that the writer can assert that during his residence in Kimberley, which extended over six years, only two cases occurred in which mislaid parcels of diamonds were not returned to their rightful owners.

The Kimberley diamond trade is almost exclusively in the hands of Jews, whose characteristics as good business-men are proverbial. In making a bargain, they neither take nor give quarter; but in cases like the one just related—and not an isolated one either—their general honesty and straightforwardness cover them with credit.

#### CAPTAIN DESMOND'S DAUGHTER.

##### IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER IV.

THOSE visits of Frank Avory to the house in Kensington Gardens were becoming dangerously sweet to Margaret Desmond. But they could not last for ever; the picture must be finished some time, and then the visits must come to an end. Life would seem more dull and cheerless than it had ever seemed before, when this one brief ray of sunshine, which had brightened it so pleasantly in passing, should be withdrawn.

One day Sir Theophilus Thorndale met Margaret on the stairs. 'Want some tidings of your nest-egg, perhaps?' he said.—'No? Well, I've some for you, at all events. It's getting on famously. I'm not forgetting to look after it, I can tell you. It will be a fine young chick by-and-by, if all goes on well. Small beginnings— You know the rest. Well, well. Good-day, good-day.'

Miss Desmond was never more surprised in her life than she was one morning about this time by the receipt of a letter bearing the Mardon-le-Willows post-mark. The address was in a writing unfamiliar to her; but on opening the letter, she found that the writer was none other than Frank Avory.

'DEAR MISS DESMOND,' wrote the young artist—'Having nothing very particular to do yesterday, I was suddenly seized by one of those unaccountable impulses to which I am liable at times, and to which I occasionally yield myself, without asking why or wherefore I should do so. The impulse on this occasion took the form of a longing to visit Mardon-le-Willows, the last place from which we have authentic tidings of my uncle having been seen alive. In coming down to this place I had no definite object in view, no expectation of being able to gather any fresh information,

no hope of being able to throw even one additional ray of light on the mystery that enshrouds my poor uncle's fate. Something, however, so strange, so utterly unlooked for, has come to my knowledge during the last few hours, that at present I scarcely know whether to place credence in it or not. My object in writing to you was not to tell you this, but to ask you whether you have by you any portrait or likeness of your father, and if so, whether you will kindly forward it to me by an early post to this place. The greatest care shall be taken of it, and it shall be returned into your hands on Friday next, when I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you, and of explaining to you fully my reasons for making what to you will probably seem a very strange request.—Meanwhile, dear Miss Desmond, believe me very sincerely yours,

FRANK AVORY.

A strange request truly, and so Margaret could not help thinking when she had read the letter through twice, the second time more carefully than the first. As it happened, she had a portrait of her father, taken some five years previously; and this she at once despatched by post to Mardon-le-Willows. All that she could then do was to muse and wonder and curb her curiosity as well as she was able, till Friday should arrive. We may be very sure that Frank Avory's letter was not destroyed; rather was it treasured up as something that in a little while would be all that was left to remind her of an episode that would stand out brightly in her life from the dark days that had gone before it, as well as from those which would surely follow.

Friday brought Mr Avory at his usual hour, looking, or so Margaret fancied, a little more grave than common. The painting went on as usual till the little people were released from their enforced quietude, and went off to play at the opposite end of the big room. Then Frank gave into Margaret's hands the portrait she had sent him a few days previously, and thanked her for the loan of it.

'I hope it served the purpose for which you required it?' said Margaret.

'It did indeed—most fully, as I will presently explain to you. I have with me a portrait of my uncle. If you have any curiosity to see it, I will show it you.'

'I should like to see it very much indeed.'

Frank drew a carte-de-visite from his pocket and handed it to Margaret. It was the likeness of a thin-faced, bookish-looking man, with scanty gray hair, a very long upper lip, and no beard or moustache. 'Place the portrait of your father beside it,' said Frank. Margaret did so. 'Two very dissimilar-looking heads, are they not?' asked the painter; and Margaret at once admitted that they were.

The portrait of Captain Desmond depicted a handsome, bold-featured man, with a thick military moustache, and hair that was still plentiful, although not unsprinkled with gray. He seemed to look out at you with a smile, which some people might have called genial, while others would only have deemed it sarcastic. But whether the smile was a pleasant one, or the contrary, it was belied to some extent by the cold watchful look of the eyes, which seemed to follow you everywhere.

'It would scarcely be possible for any one to mistake one of them for the other,' said Frank gravely, as he put away his uncle's portrait. He rose, crossed to the window, looked out for a moment or two, and then went back to his chair. 'I have a very extraordinary narrative to relate to you, Miss Desmond, and I hardly know how to begin it,' he said.

Margaret's large serious eyes were fixed on his face; the fingers of one hand were interknit with those of the other. She did not speak, but waited to hear more.

'I have already told you how I was led by a sort of unaccountable impulse to go down to Mardon,' resumed Frank, 'and that I was without any definite view in making the journey in question. When I reached the little village, it was still early in the afternoon. I readily found the house where your father had resided. It was untenanted except by an old man and his wife, who take care of the premises. By-and-by I found myself in the churchyard on the hill. I looked for your father's grave, but could find no headstone or memorial of any kind to mark it out from the others. After that, I made my way down to the shore, and sat sketching for a couple of hours, by which time it became needful to think of finding the village inn and something to eat.

'I was still some distance from the inn, when I came to a small old-fashioned red brick house, standing a little way back from the road in a pleasant garden. On the green gate which gave admittance to this tiny demesne was a brass plate with the words "Dr Bond" engraved on it; while in the garden was an elderly gentleman in a straw-hat, with his sleeves turned up, and a pair of shears in his hands, who was evidently none other than Dr Bond himself. The sight of the name on the brass plate brought at once to my mind the fact that Dr Bond was the practitioner who was called in to your father on the night of his death, in which case he was probably one of the last people who saw my uncle previously to his departure from Mardon. There could be no harm in putting a few questions to him.'

'I watched him for a minute or two without speaking; and then I opened the gate and entered the garden. "Dr Bond, I presume?" I said.'

"That's me," he answered with a nod.

"Pardon the question," I said; "but were you not in the course of last April called in professionally to Larch Cottage, to see a gentleman there of the name of Captain Desmond?"

"Certainly I was," answered the doctor. "Very bad case. Nothing could be done. Past all the medical skill in the world."

"Did you, at the time you saw Captain Desmond, see also a friend of his, a gentleman who had arrived at the Cottage that evening on a short visit?"

"Of course I did. I remember him quite well, and very much put about he seemed by his friend's sudden illness. A Mr—Mr—really I forgot the name."

"Mr Freshfield, was it not?" I suggested.

"That was it—Freshfield," he answered in a moment.

"You are perhaps aware," I said, "that Mr Freshfield left Larch Cottage the same evening, without waiting to hear the result of Captain

Desmond's illness, and that his intention was to return to London by the half-past ten train?"

"I don't know anything about the gentleman's intentions; but I believe I did hear, when I called again, that he was gone—that, however, was no concern of mine. But may I ask, young sir, the object of all these questions?"

"I am Mr Freshfield's nephew," I answered. "From the moment my uncle left Larch Cottage on the night of the 4th of April, he was never seen again by any of his friends. He never has been seen by them from that time to this. He disappeared as utterly as if the earth had swallowed him up."

"Dr Bond pushed up his spectacles and stared at me with his mouth agape. "A most extraordinary tale, young gentleman—most extraordinary!" he said.

"Although you only saw Mr Freshfield once and for a very short time," I said, "you would probably recognise him again if you were to see his portrait." With that, I put into the doctor's hands the likeness which I showed you a few minutes ago, Miss Desmond. Down came his spectacles as he took it between his thumb and finger. Then holding it so that the light of the setting sun shone full on it, and pursing up his lips with a critical air, he scrutinised it carefully.

"Bless my heart, young gentleman," he said presently, "there's a mistake somewhere! This is the likeness of Captain Desmond, the man who died; not of his friend, whom you spoke of just now; and a very good likeness too."

"For the moment, I was too surprised to make any reply. Then I said: "Pardon me, sir, for seeming to doubt the accuracy of your memory; but this is certainly the portrait, not of Captain Desmond, but of my uncle, Mr Freshfield. That is a point on which I cannot possibly be mistaken."

"Dr Bond grew very red in the face. "Tilly-willy! young sir," he exclaimed irascibly; "whether it's the likeness of your uncle or whether it isn't, I neither know nor care. All I say is, and I'll stick to it, that it's the likeness of the man who died at Larch Cottage one night last April.—But my dinner's getting cold, and I must go; and so good-evening to you."

"I went on my way to the inn like a dazed man. I knew not what to think, what to do. Later on in the evening, I wrote that note to you in which I asked you to send me your father's portrait, and decided not to leave Mardon till I should receive your reply. As soon as the portrait came to hand, I went to Dr Bond for the second time. "Will you oblige me by telling me whether you recognise this as the likeness of any one whom you have ever seen?" I said.

"He had scarcely set eyes on it before he said: "Ah, now I see that you have found out your mistake. *This* is the likeness of Captain Desmond's friend, the gentleman who went away the evening he died—Mr Freshfield, I think you called him."

"It was but the day before yesterday, Miss Desmond, that these words were said to me. I have nothing more to add. You now know as much as I know myself. That my uncle is dead, there seems little or no reason to doubt; but why he and Captain Desmond should have exchanged

names and identities, is a mystery which I confess myself utterly unable to fathom. Can you help me to a clue? Can you illumine my darkness with even the faintest glimmer of light?"

Margaret was sitting with blanched face and staring eyes. She had not interrupted Frank's narrative by a word. She started when he appealed to her thus directly, and tried to speak, but the words died away on her lips. Frank walked to the window, to give her time to recover herself. Presently she said: "What you have just told me, Mr Avory, surprises me as utterly as it can possibly have surprised you. It is a mystery to which I have not the faintest clue; it is something so utterly unaccountable, that I can scarcely credit that my ears have heard aright."

At this moment, Lady Thorndale entered the room, and presently Frank went. Never had Margaret longed for evening to come as she longed that afternoon, that she might be alone and have leisure to think.

Little sleep had Margaret Desmond that night. Her mind was a chaos of confused doubts and perplexed questionings. Again and again one question put itself to her with wearying persistency: Could it be possible that her father was still alive? She had long ago come to the conclusion that his appearance to her in the dead of night in her chamber at Larch Cottage was nothing more than the hallucination of an over-excited brain; but after what she had been told to-day, she could not help asking herself whether it might not in very truth have been her father himself whom she saw, and no mere figment of the imagination. But the more she thought over all that Frank Avory had told her, the more perplexed and confused she became. On one point only it seemed to her that her duty was clear: she must go to Dieppe and seek out Mrs Desmond, and demand from her so much of explanation as would satisfy Mr Avory with regard to his uncle's fate. Nothing less was due to him, after the discoveries he had already made; and if she could not obtain such an explanation for him, there was little doubt but he would seek it for himself.

The very fact of having decided on a definite course of action brought some comfort to her mind. As soon as breakfast was over, she sought five minutes' private interview with Lady Thorndale; after which she sat down and penned a brief note to Frank Avory, telling him where she was going, and what was the object she had in view.

Twenty-four hours later, Miss Desmond rang the bell of Madame Belot's boarding-house, No. 19 Rue de la Harpe, Dieppe. Two minutes later, she found herself in the presence of Madame Belot herself.

"Mademoiselle is probably a relative of Madame Desmond?" said the boarding-house keeper, as she glanced from Margaret's card to Margaret's face.

"I am Mrs Desmond's step-daughter. I have come all the way from London to see her. Is there any reason why I should not see her at once?"

"No reason at all, except that Madame Desmond is not here to be seen," answered Madame Belot drily. "It is now three days ago since Madame left the house, without saying a word to any one, and taking with her only a small hand-bag. She

has neither been seen nor heard of since. *C'est vraiment une affaire très mystérieuse.*

Margaret knew not what to say or do.

'Mademoiselle is probably well known to Madame Desmond's brother, Monsieur Ingram?' asked Madame Belot after a pause.

Margaret shook her head. 'I knew that Mrs Desmond had a brother residing in Dieppe; but I do not know him, nor did I ever hear his name before.'

'Monsieur Ingram is a charming gentleman—such manners!—but he is ill, very ill indeed. Still, if Mademoiselle would like to see him, Jeanne shall take up her card.'

There could be no harm, Margaret thought, in her seeing this Mr Ingram, providing he were not too ill to receive her. Information of some sort he might perhaps be able and willing to afford her. So Jeanne took her card up; and presently came back to say that Monsieur would see Mademoiselle Desmond.

Margaret was ushered into a large sitting-room with three windows, the blinds of which were let down, to exclude the glaring sunlight. For a moment or two, Margaret could discern little in the semi-obscurity of the room. Then she was aware of the figure of a man stretched on a couch at one end of the room. The figure rose on its elbow as she stood hesitating in the middle of the floor. 'Madge!'

A low inarticulate cry burst from her lips; she staggered a step or two forward, and then fell senseless to the ground.

(To be concluded next week.)

#### INDIA IN THE HOT WEATHER.

BY AN ANGLO-INDIAN.

'GIVE a dog a bad name, and hang him,' says the proverb; and I fear that its spirit has been, and is applied to India; for no country has been more unjustly maligned as regards its climate; and the 'bad name' ascribed to it on this score by the ignorant has more or less contributed to the evil reputation under which the country still labours. The shadow of yellow-fever hangs over the West Indies; that of malarious-intermittent darkens the west coast of Africa; while cholera broods in malignant persistence over the hills, valleys, and plains of Hindustan, this much-maligned land. This is the popular idea; against which it will be useless to urge that cholera is relatively less fatal out here than typhus or consumption at home. Yet such is the fact. All the complaints against the Indian climate merge in a vulgar howl against the hot weather; and few will believe me when I maintain that it is not the climate which kills, but the foolish and mad habits of those who are exposed to it. After an experience of twenty-eight years, I assert this fearlessly and truthfully; and maintain that if we take ordinary care of ourselves, the country will take very good care of us.

Let me illustrate what I mean. As a rule, 'the hot weather' in the Bengal Presidency—to which these remarks mainly apply—commences normally about the fifteenth of March, and extends to the middle of June, when 'the rains' set in, refreshing the thirsty soil, and cooling the air. Their influence extends well into October, and then the 'cold weather' ushers in a truly enjoyable climate. From the middle of March to the middle of June,

'the hot wind' blows steadily, and at times fiercely, parching up everything with its fiery breath. But the fiercer and hotter it blows, the greater, as I will presently show, are our facilities for keeping ourselves cool. During the hot weather, Nature seeks repose; all animals share in it as much as possible; birds and beasts seek the shade of trees, and all labour is suspended between ten A.M. and five P.M. Yet at this time we think it necessary to take the most violent exercise. In the month of May, when the heat rages most fiercely, we deem it our duty to go tiger-shooting, because then, owing to the heat, these felines are less given to wandering. During the same month, and all through the hot weather, we also deem it our duty to take the most violent exercise to be had anywhere, and that is in the racket courts, which, perversely, are chiefly frequented in the hot weather.

Not only do we show our folly in thus taking violent exercise during the season of Nature's repose, but we redouble the folly by counteracting the fatigue and violent perspiration with iced 'pegs'—one and a half to two ounces of brandy or whisky in a bottle of soda-water—or large draughts of iced beer, and then getting under the punkah to cool down. No wonder, then, that malarious fever, dysentery, or abscess of the liver, reward our longings for violent exercise in the jungle, racket court, or polo ground.

How, then, do rational people pass the hot weather? Outdoor work is generally got over between daybreak and eight or nine A.M., and then we are prisoners till five or six P.M., having to while away eight or nine hours in keeping the body cool and the mind employed. Our cooling appliances are the tattie, the punkah, and the thermantidote, which I shall individually describe.

The tattie is a large curved or sloping screen, which accurately fits into each door or window facing the west, and is made of the roots of the khus-khus grass (*Andropogon muricatus*), which singularly combines strength and porosity with the most delicious and refreshing fragrance. These screens are about an inch in thickness, and during the hot and dry west wind, are saturated from outside with water, which immediately commences evaporating under the fierceness of the blast; and as evaporation always implies cold, the wind, which, in the veranda, would raise the thermometer to one hundred and twenty degrees Fahrenheit, passes into the house at seventy-five or eighty degrees, laden with a delicious fragrance. While tatties are in working order, all other cooling appliances are unnecessary. Unfortunately, the west wind, commencing about ten A.M., dies away about sunset, and then we resort to our punkahs and thermantidores; but at its acme in May, it often blows all night, and then we have cold days and nights within doors. The dryness of the west wind is very remarkable; its scorching influence at once detects veneer, which crumples up and peels off; unseasoned woods warp, split, or contract, so much so, that I have seen two solid slabs of a round table part nearly an inch during the west wind, and rejoin during the damp of the rains; the boards of books turn outwards, and the ink of your pen dries as you write. The west wind is also highly electrical; insulate yourself on a couple of bottles, and then comb your hair or beard

with an ebonite comb, and a by-stander will easily elicit a spark from your knuckle. If you perform in the dark, and glance at the mirror, you will see your hair and beard alive with sparks. When your horse comes up for your ride, you will be astonished to see each hair of his tail erect; pass your hand down it, and it falls flat. In some parts of India—for instance, in the neighbourhood of Gwalior and Jhansi—we have another delightful form of tattie. A small creeping thorny variety of the bér (*Zizyphus jujuba*) is largely found in the jungles; this is collected and dried; and at the proper time, the whole west veranda is inclosed with thorny walls nine to twelve inches thick, and these being saturated from outside, all doors are thrown open, and a delightful temperature secured. Tatties are of no use during the easterly wind which ushers in and accompanies the rains. Laden with moisture, it is a damp wind, and therefore retards evaporation.

Thus much for tatties. Punkahs are more familiar, and consist either of long rectangular frames, or beams hanging from the ceiling of the rooms, their lower edge furnished with heavy frills; the punkah rope is pulled by a punkah-wallah from the veranda outside the house, and the machine waves noiselessly to and fro. Then we have hand-punkahs or large fans, which may be made of cloth, of khus-khus, moistened when used; or we may adopt the familiar dried leaf of the fan-palm (*Borassus flabelliformis*). Punkahs have no effect whatever in actually cooling the air of the rooms; they merely set the air in motion, and thereby cool the person by promoting evaporation from the skin.

The thermantidote is a great institution, and is merely an exaggerated form of what I recollect as the Cambridge bellows, a small edition of a furnace-blast. The fans are generally from three to four feet in diameter, and are worked by a fly-wheel with an endless band; the air apertures on each side of the fans are closed by khus-khus tatties, so that cold air passes inwards; and if the machine is carefully constructed and properly worked, a prodigious volume of cold air is pumped into the house; and if its inner doors are judiciously closed, the cool air will penetrate every nook and corner of the house.

Thus much about our appliances for keeping the body cool during the hot weather. How do we mentally relieve its tedium? I fear I must confess that in the majority of instances we while away the weary hours in smoking, drinking iced 'pegs,' reading the latest novels, card or billiard playing, or sleeping. The males in the minority employ their time in reading, writing, or studying the language; not a few have made themselves famous as archeologists, numismatists, geologists, or natural historians. Their ladies, on the other hand, have ample employment in looking after their nurseries and households, devoting their leisure hours to music, correspondence, and self-improvement. Writing in the hot weather is a sore trouble, for our greatest enemy is then the punkah, against which we have to wage constant and vigilant warfare, our weapons being letter-weights or shot-bags. You are writing, say, the four and a half sheets of thin paper which constitute your weekly home despatch, and are suddenly called away from your desk. The punkah insidiously sent you that call; and when you

return, you find your sheets careering about the room, and the punkah creaking its satisfaction at the joke, and at having got the better of the letter-weights, which, in your hurry, you forgot to adjust. Or you may be writing at night with all your weighting appliances in order, and your kerosine lamp, punkah-proof as you fancy, burning brightly on your table. Foiled in its attempt on the latter, the punkah fiend minutely overhauls your lamp, and rejoicingly finding a weak point, leaves you suddenly in darkness. But a little forethought enables you easily to overreach the punkah, and you can read and write in comparative comfort.

The long day at last draws to a close; the shadows lengthen eastward, and the jubilation of the crows and mynas announces the approach of evening; all doors, hermetically sealed since the morning, are thrown open, and we prepare to go forth. The lunatics troop off to the racket court; sane individuals betake themselves to riding or driving, repairing to the band-stand or to some *al fresco* 'at-home,' where Badminton or Lawn-tennis, winding up with a dance, constitute the attractions, croquet having been quite banished. All wend homewards by seven or half-past seven P.M.; dinner is discussed; perhaps music, reading, or card-playing follow for an hour; and then by nine or ten all have retired, or are supposed to have retired to their slumbers.

And so weeks and months pass, and the approach of June is hailed as sure to usher in 'the rains.' But a trying ordeal is still to be undergone in facing the interval between the two winds which are termed monsoons; the north-easterly one dies away towards the end of May, and the south-westerly does not set in until about the middle of June. The interval is a most trying atmospheric lull, and we are entirely dependent on the punkah or thermantidote, or both.

It must not, however, be supposed that the hot weather is accompanied throughout by heat unmitigated and intense. I will briefly indicate its thermometric features, say at a central position like Allahabad. In January, the indoor temperature will reach its minimum, perhaps standing at fifty-four degrees; the rise is very gradual, and gets into the 'eighties' towards the middle of March; when steady at eighty-five degrees, punkahs become necessary. Above ninety degrees, the heat is oppressive; and at ninety-five, horribly so; this is generally the temperature indoors during the lull between the monsoons. In exceptional years, I have known pillows and sheets to be uncomfortably hot, requiring sprinkling with water; and I have similarly retired to rest in drenched night-clothes. But the hot weather is mercifully interrupted by two remarkable meteorological phenomena. First, at its commencement we have almost always violent hailstorms, which beneficially cool the air; and then at its acme, we have those very remarkable electrical dust-storms which impress fresh life and vigour all around. Let me describe one.

Nature seems subdued under the great heat, and is in absolute repose. Not the faintest breath is there to coax the faintest movement in the leaves; silence prevails, for even the garrulous crows can't caw because their beaks are wide open to assist respiration. Suddenly the welcome cry is heard

“Tufán átá!” (A storm coming!), and the house-servants rush in to close all doors. Anxious to witness the magnificence of the approaching storm, you remain out to brave it, and soon feel its approaching breath on your cheek. Looking to windward, you see a black cloud approaching, and before it, leaves and sticks, kites and crows, circling in wild confusion. You now hear its roar, and, while rapt in admiration, you are enveloped in its grimy mantle, and have to look to your footing in resisting its fury; and this is no joke, for eyes, nostrils, and ears are occluded with dust. As the blast approaches, you may see a flash of lightning and hear its clap of thunder, and then feel the heavy cold rain-drops which sparsely fall around. Darkness, black as Erebus, surrounds you, darkness which literally may be felt, for clouds of dust occasion it; and if you are within doors, night prevails, requiring the lighting of lamps. The storm passes, light returns, and you find everything begrimed with dust. Every door is now thrown open, to admit the cool, bracing, ozone-charged air, which you eagerly inhale with dilated nostrils, and feel that you have secured a fresh lease of existence.

Such are the main features of our up-country hot weather; but they are greatly modified by latitude and elevation. Thus, in Calcutta you miss the hot wind, have more thunderstorms, and enjoy to the full the delicious sea-breeze, which generally sets in about sunset and lasts all night.

Then the stations on the high table-lands of Central India have, as a rule, diminished temperature and refreshing night-breezes. Taking all things into consideration, the ten to fifteen days of awful lull between the monsoons are the most trying portion of our hot weather; and I hope I have shown that in this respect, India, all round, is not so black as she has been painted.

#### SCHOOL-HOURS IN ENGLAND, FRANCE, AND GERMANY.

In the *Journal of Education* for September there is an elaborate table, showing the number of hours given to various studies in eighteen leading public schools in England, to which are added the timetable of a German gymnasium and that of a French lycée. From the data thus collected, it is found that the average number of hours per week in an English public school is about twenty-six, as against thirty-one in a German gymnasium, and forty in a French lycée. Reckoning the hours spent in the preparation of lessons, and taking into account the holidays (which in England are twice as long as they are on the continent), it is found that the respective working hours of an English, German, and French boy are in the ratio of five, eight, and eleven. That is, the English boy each day works one-third less time than the German, and less than one-half the time of a French boy. As to the subjects taught, while science is not now altogether ignored in English schools, yet classics still form in these seminaries the staple of the education given. An English schoolboy gives fourteen hours a week, or more than half his time, to classics; a French lycée scholar devotes twenty-eight hours a week, for his first three years, to his native tongue, and does not begin Latin till the second period, or Greek till the third period—that is, till he has been six years at school.

In this connection, it may be of interest to quote the following passage in the recent address by Sir John Lubbock, Bart., M.P., as President of the British Association. Reviewing the progress of science and arts for the last fifty years, he went on to say: ‘In Education, some progress has been made towards a more rational system. When I was at a public school, neither science, modern languages, nor arithmetic formed any part of the school system. This is now happily changed. Much, however, still remains to be done. Too little time is still devoted to French and German, and it is much to be regretted that even in some of our best schools, they are taught as dead languages. Lastly, with few exceptions, only one or two hours, on an average, are devoted to science. We have, I am sure, none of us any desire to exclude or discourage literature. What we ask is that, say, six hours a week each should be devoted to mathematics, modern languages, and science—an arrangement which would still leave twenty hours for Latin and Greek. I admit the difficulties which schoolmasters have to contend with; nevertheless, when we consider what science has done and is doing for us, we cannot but consider that our present system of education is, in the words of the Duke of Devonshire’s Commission, little less than a national misfortune.’

#### H A U N T E D.

LIKE unto ghosts that come when darkness broods  
O'er tower and turret of some castle hoary,  
And people once again its solitudes  
With shades of vanished glory;

From out the haunted chambers of our hearts,  
Where all the lost things of the Past lie hidden,  
Some subtle incense will, as day departs,  
Steal softly forth unbidden.

Incense from off the altar of dead dreams,  
Whereon new hopes to higher heights have risen,  
And calmly shining, shed down milder beams,  
To gild this earthly prison.

But still a mournful sweetness hovers round  
These mystic phantoms from the heart's recesses;  
The tender touch of lips that yield no sound—  
The sheen of silken tresses;

The nameless tokens of the dear dead days,  
The twilight trysts by moonlit waters smiling,  
The golden sunsets wrapt in dreamy haze,  
The spell of Love's beguiling;

The rapture of a summer long ago,  
The song that came and went in broken numbers,  
The holy hush of Death, the brow of snow,  
The churchyard where she slumbers;

The tender pressure of a vanished hand,  
The broken chain that time must further sever,  
The merry laughter of the childish band,  
The voices hushed for ever.

Strains of sad music from a far-off shore—  
Mute memories these that woo with soft caresses,  
And tinge with sacred radiance evermore  
Life's lonely wildernesses.

W. C. H.

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